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State could get \$358 million for road projects

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Iowa could receive \$358 million for highways, public transportation and other road-related needs from the federal economic stimulus package signed by President Barack Obama Tuesday, a local official said Friday.

"That's the estimate from the IDOT (Iowa Department of Transportation)," said Barry Cleaveland, a member of the state's transportation commission. "It's spread out across the state."

Gov. Chet Culver said Friday Iowa is moving ahead with 19 highway and bridge projects just days after a federal stimulus package was signed into law.

The most expensive projects are two bridge replacements and pavement projects on Interstate 29 in Fremont and Mills counties. They total about \$31 million.

The work will begin when weather allows.

Meanwhile, Council Bluffs could receive \$4 million for infrastructure, housing and development needs, added Don Gross, director of the Community Development Department.

"That's based upon what I've seen," he said.

There could be more money available since that package provides funds for numerous initiatives, Gross said, like public safety, airports, education and energy.

Of the \$4 million that could come to the city, \$3 million is being sought by the Public Works Department for two street projects, City Engineer Ron Neal said.

Meanwhile, Pottawattamie County is likely to get funds for several projects, according to Cleaveland, including the resurfacing, along with new shoulders, of U.S. Highway 6 from Interstate 80 to Oakland. Money for improved lighting along I-80 through the county is likely, Cleaveland added.

Meanwhile, there are numerous sites on the Web highlighting various organizations with their own project needs, including a list of urban projects from the U.S. Conference of Mayors on the site, StimulusWatch. Only two Iowa cities have projects on that list - Des Moines and Davenport - perhaps making some think Council Bluffs would not get any money.

Not at all, according to Gross.

"It's probably more of a promotional thing to demonstrate there's a lot of local needs," he said of that list. "That's an advocacy thing publicized by the mayors to demonstrate to Congress there are local needs in infrastructure. It's not a list someone will make a decision on."

Neal said he is confident the Public Works Department will receive the requested \$3 million.

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-The Associated Press contributed to this report



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